eome eautiously baek, rod by rod, yard by yard, from one pereh to another; until, at last one might almost foretell just what road she would take next, in going home. Then, more swiftly than the untrained eye might follow, she would have vanished out of spaee; and her bright eye would peer out at one from her half hidden eyrie. Finally, in near despair, I hid the eamera just baek of a blaekened stump, behind a pine sapling. There I left it, for a while, "all set".

In due time the observer had erushed himself into shapelessness, among the rough herbage, but within reaeh of the holder-slide. And, there, seorehed by a mounting sun, pinehed by wandering ants, devoured by hungry deer-flies, he lay, a long, long time, waiting as only an enthusiast ean wait! Cautionsly, when the elimaetie moment eame, the slide was slowly drawn, ineh by ineh, with a hand upreaehed. The noisy shutter elicked its closing. And, the ghost of a shadow went flitting, quiek as thought, out from the covert, into the sunlight, and far away, down the steeps.

Topeka, Kansas.

BEACH-COMBERS

BY BAYARD H. CHRISTY

A gently eurving bay opens northeastwardly to the breadth of Lake Superior. To the left against the horizon extends the blue band of Keweenaw Point; its mountains, often undercut by mirage, seem to float in air; to the right lake and sky meet in a far line that is serried and notched when the waters are tossed by storm. The bay swings inland between forest-erowned headlands of red sandstone. A long, low sand dune, extending from one promontory to the other, wind-built from behind, storm-beaten in front, falls abruptly to a narrow beach.

The erest of the dune is grown with harsh grass and beaeh peas; its landward slope is eovered with red-berried kinnikiniek; beyond extends a ridged, sandy plain, sparsely grown with jaek pines and norways, earpeted with hueklebery bushes that now, in early Oetober, are aflame amidst faded brakes and dim gray mosses. Wavelets lap the beach and raise a gentle murmur. When the wind is offshore even the murmur fails; but when lake winds blow a heavy surf mounts and roars landward. The breadth of the beaeh, from the precipitous face of the dune to the ineonstant margin of water, is not great—two, three, six paces, at most. The waves beat upon a firm, steep slope, and in places reaeh the very base of the dune; but, for the greater part, there is a level interval between of loose, dry sand.

Peeled logs lie cast about, half buried; and each spent wave leaves an arc of small litter, to be caught and cast up again, endlessly. The water is cold and clean, the air fresh, and within the forest spreads the fragrance of the pines.

At the season of which I speak, during the early days of October, the lake side is alive with migrating birds. To what extent the hundred-and-fifty-mile-wide lake is an obstacle in the northward and southward movements, I do not certainly know. To the waterbirds, certainly, it is none. From the sand I pick up the frail body of a warbler, the life spent perhaps at the very completion of a long over-water flight; but repeatedly I have observed transients moving high in air, not in a north-and-south course across the lake, but east and west along its shore.

By whatever route they come, here along the dunes Tree Sparrows rise from the grasses; at the edge of the woods White-crowned and Harris's Sparrows are skulking. Gray-cheeked Thrushes appear in the shadows of the deeper forests; and the bands of Myrtle Warblers and Juncos are, I doubt not, augmented by newcomers from the north.

It is not, however, of the generality that I mean to speak, but only of a small part; only of those few birds that frequent the beach itself. This is the narrowest, the slenderest, the most diminutive of beaches—a strip of wave-dashed sand, three or four miles long, thirty or forty feet wide; slight in comparison with the beaches of the lower lakes, but adequate for my purpose. It serves to sift out from the moving hosts a few birds of riparian habit; not many kinds, not many individuals, but sufficient to constitute a group apart. There are among them birds of different and remote families, with nothing more in common than that they are birds and that they feed from the same table. I gain my specimens selectively, as the chemist gains his on a sheet of filter paper, and devote to them my further attention.

Setting out one morning under a gray sky, I find the lake tossed by a stiff, cold, northeast wind, and the waters tumbling and roaring on the strand. Far out to the north the sky is clear, and against it a skein of smoke is thrown from some steamer that passes below the horizon line. Herring Gulls come stringing along, two hundred feet in air, following exactly the line of the beach. Manifestly an aerial billow, as over a sunken reef, mounts above the rim of the forest, and along the crest of this billow the gulls find a highway. They course along it on scarcely moving wings. Occasionally one swings aside and glides to the surface of the bay. Very rarely one flies from the water to rest upon the shingle and sun himself. They

feed in the open water, rather, and not upon the beach itself. It is different with the Ring-billed Gulls, a species of which a few are present. Frequently I find one of them standing plover-like at the water's edge. They are deliberate in movement, and, as I suppose, happen occasionally upon some small fish cast ashore.

Advancing along the dune this wild, gray morning, I cross the trail of a deer that has lately come to water and gone again; a gang of ducks, flying high, comes down-wind from the open lake; an eagle rises from the woods and flaps out to sea. His flight is heavy and powerful. Occasionally he furls a wing, slips sidewise, and rises again, as though this breasting of the strong, cold wind were pleasurable. The eagles have an eye upon the beach, and upon the wide waters beyond, and anticipate even the gulls in finding fish when they rise gasping to the surface. Ravens, too, fly over the treetops; and it may be that they come sometimes to the strand; I do not, however, recall seeing one there.

Reaching at length the very bottom of the bay, I come upon the first of the true beach-combers, a Pipit. The lake tumbles and roars, the wind throws the spray afar; and amid the tumult the Pipit walks daintily, prettily; wagging its tail after its manner; not a feather ruffled; picking on this side and that as it goes. As I come near, the bird eyes me alertly, and presently darts up with its clear, sweet *pipit* cry, flying out over the water, leaping upward in its flight; but presently it swings back and pitches again only a short distance remote, and there recommences its busy progress, and I do not again disturb it.

Next day, the wind having spent itself, I find in the same place a company of three birds—two Pipits and with them a Lapland Longspur. The Pipits stand erect and walk daintily; the Longspur crouches and creeps. The Pipits manifest some timidity; the Longspur is quite confiding. Moving gently I find I can approach him so nearly that I have no need of field-glasses. Indeed, I am so near that the field-glasses may not be brought to focus upon him. The Pipits seem to feed preferably on the hard wet slope, along the lines of freshly cast-up drift; the Longspur creeps over the dry and softer sand near the base of the dune.

The birds now are in winter plumage. Nevertheless, upon the creamy olive-gray plumage of the Pipits—and upon one of them, particularly—spreads a faint glow, a certain impalpable suffusion, of cinnamon red. As for the Longspur, the black of the head is in eclipse, and shows somewhat uncertainly in a band across the upper breast and in emphatic spots at the margins of the ochre-colored cheek areas. The

large patch of sorrel brown over the nape of the neck is well defined. I note the long hind claw, almost as though I held the bird in my hand.

A rather unexpected element in this riparian gathering of birds is the Rusty Blackbird. He is a bird that more commonly is found gathered in small bands and moving about in alder-grown swampy places; but he frequents the shore too, and that regularly. In such place, however, I have invariably found him singly. He walks briskly, quite in the manner of the more familiar Bronzed Grackle. He follows the edge of the retreating wave, his bright, pale-amber eye alert, gleaning from the slight swath of drift. He is wary, and yet fearless; when disturbed he flies swiftly to a fresh stand a hundred yards down the beach; and when disturbed again he will raise his head, flick his tail, utter a low, harsh note, and fly to refuge in the woods.

It is in autumn that the significance of the name Rusty Blackbird is manifest. The jet black plumage is then, over the fore part of the body, veiled in golden brown; it is when the bird flies away that the black outspread wings and tail, together with the manner of flight, afford the familiar appearance of a blackbird.

The Black-bellied Plover is the only true shorebird on my list of beach-combers. Individual plovers linger here well into October. They are not timid birds, but they are very wary. Only from afar and through field-glasses can I detect them actually feeding. They cover the beach widely, from the water's edge to the face of the dune, feeding most commonly in the higher, drier portion.

As I approach, the bird comes to attention, and as I draw nearer still he runs fitfully before me. It is only by swifter approach that I can put him to flight, and then on broadly white and outspread wings and tail he swings away over the water and curves again to the strand, perhaps a quarter of a mile away. A silvery gray bird, with conspicuous black points of bill, eye, and folded primaries, and feet. The only question that rises is whether he may by chance be a Golden Plover, and the only sure field mark is the hind toe—its presence or its absence. And I challenge any one easily to detect that character. He stands, sunk a quarter of an inch deep in soft sand; you disturb him and, though he takes to firm moist footing, his legs go twinkling away, so fast that you get nothing. Only after slow and patient following and repeated fumblings of chance does your bird at last pause, broadside on, and afford that glimpse of the small elevated, almost wart-like enlargement on the slender shank that settles the matter at last.

On the morning of the seventh of October the Horned Larks appeared—a party of seven. They are sociable creatures, roaming and

feeding in companies. These are newcomers from the north, easily distinguishable by their lemon-yellow faces from the paler, southerly ranging birds of the interior. They run about over the drift; and, when disturbed, run hurriedly. They easily take wing, climb high, and sweep about with sweet, twittering calls, as though irresolute. But at length hesitation is gone, and they swing down to another feeding place.

There is but one bird more on my list—the Snow Bunting. I expected him. Each morning as I came out and searched the strand, he was in my mind; but it was not until the last morning of my stay—that of the thirteenth day of October—that the Snow Buntings appeared, two of them, crouching and feeding, very much after the manner of longspurs. But the birds are of very different coloring. The longspur is a black and brown bird, trimmed with white; the bunting is a white bird, trimmed with black and brown. He has come from Arctic islands, from granite hills pocketed with snow; and here along the lake shores he will continue through all the ice and storm of winter. But once have I seen him as far to southward as at my home in the Ohio Valley. His is the hardihood of the ptarmigan, and here he finds an adequate economy.

What provender, then, does nature afford these few birdlings on a wave-beaten strand? Thinking of this, I gathered between my fingertips and spread upon my palm a pinch of this small wrack. And of what did it consist? Of pine needles, bits of bark, the keys from maple trees, the small winged seeds of birch, alder, pine; and here the diaphanous shell of some minute shrimp-like creature. It is such matters as these that are the prizes of the beach-combers.

Presently the gathering will have dispersed. Indeed, when the buntings came, the plovers had already gone. And the plover will fly far—perhaps to another continent, and even to another hemisphere —before the urge within him will be spent. It was but by chance that, pausing here, he was found in association with half a dozen other particular kinds.

Are these trivial matters? Certainly they are. What matters then are significant? Let us adapt to our purpose the parable of the Saxon chronicle. We too are creatures busied on our arena along our reach of sand. On one side spread infinite waters across which we have come. Presently winter will be upon us, and we shall be going to some far and unseen place. Please God we go as confidently and as unerringly as the birds.

Sewickley, Pa.